

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SSM-05 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-09

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS USUN 1631

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, XF

SUBJ: SYG WALDHEIM'S PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 23: REMARKS ON  
THE MIDDLE EAST

1. IN REPLY TO A QUESTION ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS, WALDHEIM REMARKED: "I DO NOT THINK THERE WILL BE AN IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION. IF I STRESSED THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION, I DID NOT SAY ANYTHING NEW. I THINK THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS SERIOUS AND THAT RESUMPTION OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE. I STRESSED THAT POINT IN GENEVA. OF COURSE, WE HAVE NOW TO SEE HOW THE NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT WILL BE FORMED IN ISRAEL. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE TALKS IN REGARD TO A RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WERE HELD WITH THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, AND THEREFORE IT IS LOGICAL THAT WE HAVE TO SEE HOW THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL WILL ACT IN REGARD TO THE PROBLEMS OF FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL AND SPECIFICALLY IN REGARD TO THE MIDDLE EAST. I THEREFORE FEEL IT PREMATURE TO

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MAKE A CONCRETE COMMENT IN THIS REGARD. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHAT KIND OF APPROACH THE NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL ADOPT TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM.

"HAVING SAID THIS, I WISH TO STRESS AGAIN MY GREAT PREOCCUPATION WITH THE SITUATION IN THE AREA,

AND I HOPE THAT, AFTER THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL HAS BEEN FORMED, CONTACTS WILL BE RESUMED SO THAT WE MAY GET A BETTER PICTURE OF THE SITUATION."

2. THE SECRETARY GENERAL CONTINUED, "SINCE THERE WERE SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS APPARTNELTY -- OR PERHAPS IT IS BETTER TO SAY "MISINTERPRETATIONS" -- OF WHAT I SAID IN GENEVA LAST WEEK, I WISH TO QUOTE WHAT I SAID AT MY PRESS CONFERENCE THERE. I SAID: 'THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL TO CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS AND THAT THE CONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. IT IS VITAL THAT SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS SHOULD HAPPEN THIS YEAR, BECAUSE WITHOUT PROGRESS I THINK THE DANGER WILL INCREASE, THE DANGER OF ANOTHER MILITARY CONFRONTATION.' I THINK THAT FROM THAT QUOTATION IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT I FULLY SUPPORT ALL EFFORTS TO CONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, IN THE LIGHT OF THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS, IT IS ALSO EVIDENT THAT THERE IS A NEW SITUATION. WE HAVE TO TAKE THIS NEW SITUATION INTO ACCOUNT; IT COULD, PERHAPS, DELAY THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, BUT I STILL HOPE THAT THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE CAN TAKE PLACE BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR."

3. TO A FURTHER QUESTION ON THE PROSPECTS FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE, THE SYG SAID "MUCH AS I WOULD WELCOME AN EARLY CONVENING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE -- UNCLASSIFIED

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IT IS TO BE HOPED BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR -- I HAVE TO STRESS THE POINT THAT WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH A NEW SITUATION AND, AS YOU RIGHTLY SAID, WE MUST PREPARE THE CONFERENCE; WE MUST CLARIFY THE POSITIONS BEFORE WE GO TO THE CONFERENCE, AS FAR AS THE PROCEDURAL ASPECTS ARE CONCERNED AS WELL AS THE SUBSTANCE. WE MUST, FOR INSTANCE, KNOW WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A CONFERENCE; THE QUESTION OF PLO PARTICIPATION IS STILL OPEN; NO AGREEMENT HAS YET BEEN REACHED IN THIS REGARD.

"THERE IS THE QUESTION OF SUBSTANCE: WHAT WILL THE FUTURE SOLUTION BE? OF COURSE, WE CANNOT EXPECT THAT THAT PROBLEM WILL BE SOLVED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE, BECAUSE THEN WE WOULD NOT NEED THE CONFERENCE. JUST TO RUBBER-STAMP SOMETHING WHICH HAS BEEN WORKED OUT IS NOT THE PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE. BUT WE HAVE TO GET A CERTAIN RAPPROACHEMENT OF THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS WHICH STILL EXIST -- FOR INSTANCE, ABOUT

THE CREATION OF A PALESTINIAN HOMELAND, AS PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SAID, AND ABOUT THE QUESTION OF RECIPROCAL RECOGNITION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIAN ENTITY. I AM JUST MENTIONING SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE STILL OPEN AND ON WHICH THE OPINIONS OF THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS ARE STILL FAR APART.

"SO LET THERE BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THIS: I THINK WE HAVE TO BE REALISTIC; WE HAVE TO SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE. WHY CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT THINGS ARE GOING FINE, IF, IN FACT, WE ARE STILL FAR AWAY FROM AGREEMENT ON BASIC ISSUES?

"THEREFORE, I FEEL THAT IT IS EXTREMELY IMPOR-  
TANT TO USE THE MONTHS AHEAD TO CLARIFY THE SITUATION  
AND TO BRING THE POSITIONS CLOSER TO EACH OTHER. WE  
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WILL THEN BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO SAY WHEN THE  
GENEVA CONFERENCE CAN BE CONVENED.  
LEONARD

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